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OUR SISTER REPUBLIC

A Single Tax Story

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THE SINGLE TAX

BY

JOHN COCHRANE

COCHRANE PUBLISHING CO.

Tribune Building, New York

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OUR SISTER REPUBLIC

It would be of no avail to examine any map of the world or terrestrial globe to hunt for Our Sister Republic. As amazing as it may seem, up to date we have failed to find any mention of it in the writings of ancients or moderns. Already all sorts of theories are afloat to account for its appearance. At this present moment we are not prepared to define its exact locality. Candidly, the phenomenon of how and whence it came does not concern us. To the curious and interested we would say that the world will soon know all that can be told about it.

However, we shall not be backward in claiming our rights. Beyond all question and doubt we are its discoverers. It actually came about by chance. Science is out of it. This is our story. It is strictly confidential. You must know that we are educators, editors, publishers, propagators and purveyors of enlightenment and all that that stands for. Saying this much, it is almost superfluous to add that our editorials are head and shoulders over all reading matter and influence the trend of thought in the world at large. We have proof of it every day. Notes, letters, communications, personal and by proxy—well, modesty alone refrains us from giving the name outright. This is nonsense, of course, for millions of our readers are smiling complacently at this allusion to our “sheet.” As if it could be confounded with any other. From this it will be gathered that our men are amply guaranteed to go to all corners of the earth for items of interest which are con-

stantly cropping out in our old world. Very lately two of our agents were overtaken by what we regarded an appalling catastrophe. Out of it has emerged the most sensational event of the century. Its value to the universe cannot be computed at this early date.

It was nothing short of a shipwreck—the catastrophe, we mean. Our two men were hurled out of their soft, snug berths into the cold, dark water without a second's warning. So surprised were they that one called to the other:

"I say, Coxe, where are we?"

"We've changed quarters, that's all," Coxe answered.

By this time they were both awake and opened their eyes and looked over a raging sea. It was a terrible scene. The waters surged and heaved. They rose in towering breakers and dashed over the ship and swept it down. There was a fearful panic on board. Every one was frightened. The crew screamed. They shrieked. No one heard their cries. The ocean relentlessly roared on and silenced every sound. They were all drowned. Queer, wasn't it?

Tossing about in unknown seas on bits of loosened timber, our men, more dead than alive, eventually drifted into a hospitable harbor. It seems a trifle heartless not to drop a tear just here for the lost. And, to still the sympathetic throbs that are always stirred by a tale of woe, we will say in passing that we have been untiring in our efforts to bring comfort and solace into the homes thus bereaved and desolated. If any one has been neglected, by forwarding name and correct address our typewriter or telephone girl will be instructed to send a message of condolence without delay.

The economics of the physical and natural world are inexorable, so with these sentiments of profound pity we must hasten on and devote ourselves to the fate of

our fugitives. No one will be surprised to learn that a long time elapsed before they were sufficiently restored to realize what had happened. With the return to consciousness came the sense of being tenderly looked after and surrounded by kindly and friendly people. To this day they cannot remember what language they spoke. It must have been some sort of esperanto, for no one had any difficulty in making himself understood or in understanding every one else.

By the end of the week our journalists sauntered out to take an observation. They wanted to know where they were. Their intention was to mark the spot on the earth's surface by some suitable design as a tribute to their late captain and fellow passengers swallowed up by the sea. They had wandered into a country lane when Cliff turned to Coxe and said:

"What shall it be?"

"There is nothing so impressive as a name," Coxe replied. "Names are immortal."

"They are," Cliff reaffirmed. "So they are."

"On that great flat rock, 'way up there, right in front of us, we will imprint the captain's and make it memorable for the present and all future ages."

"How shall you word it?"

"Simple and modest as he would wish," Coxe continued. "Something like this: 'In memory of Captain Stewart, who perished heroically——' "

"Stop, Coxe, stop; really I can't stand any allusion to that awful day. I'll leave the matter to you. Have you a pick, or——"

"No, I have not," Coxe interposed dejectedly.

"Well, never mind, here are two chalk pencils; and written large the inscription can be read out at sea," and drawing them from his pocket he handed them to him.

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Coxe and Clifford were botanists and geologists, in fact, all the depths and heights of nature unfolded to them like an open book. As day after day passed they were impatient to study the phenomena of life as it was presented to them in the natural and physical aspect of this new world. At this stage of their convalescence they were too much shaken up to penetrate into the forests or to scale the mountains, but it was wonderful how ways and means always came to them. In the hospitable home where they had been received and each day were regarded more and more like brothers, there never failed to be a lavish display of flowers and rare roses. The spacious salons and wide halls were always permeated with the sweetest perfume. Their host had observed their fondness for flowers and with a large hearted liberality told Coxe and Clifford to examine them, to pull them to pieces, to consider them their own. "Our men" did not require any more coaxing. The next moment they had darted over to the pretty things and with microscope in hand were analyzing these unknown specimens. For days and hours, without moving a step, they sampled and studied the flora and fauna of that zone.

This occupation was very absorbing and they almost overlooked other possibilities close at hand. It was not until late in the next week that another interest loomed up before them. One morning coming down to coffee they noticed a tree extending across the landing. It was filled with birds. They appeared to be resting a minute in their rapid flight. "Our men" were impressed with their silence.

"What a sorry lot of birds they are!" Cliff said.

"That's the way with birds," Coxe assured him; "when they want to hide. They never sing a note. Some gun has frightened them indoors."

"They are looking awfully hard at us," Cliff insisted, challenging the gaze of the birds.

"That's true," Coxe admitted, "but look how quiet and motionless they are. They believe we do not see them."

"But I say, Coxe, here's a chance to learn their nationality, birds are always patriots, strike up the Marseillaise and see if there is a Frenchman among them."

Coxe whistled. There was no response.

"No, no," Cliff cried, "not one of them has ever seasoned on the Riviera, that's certain. Try Verdi."

The same silence.

"Give them Wagner," Cliff urged again, "and if they do not chirp up, they are not Germans."

No sound. Not a note.

"I would wager that half of them are Europeans, but they are all deaf; try again, something lively, the Stars and Stripes," Cliff persisted.

Coxe suddenly stopped in the middle of a bar. "They can't help themselves, Cliff," he said apologetically, "they are dead."

"Dead! What do you mean? Sitting up so spry?"

"Put on your glasses, look, they are wired."

Cliff's head began to spin round and he was looking above, below and everywhere.

"No one heard us, Coxe," he said, confidently, "no one heard us. The wisest men make mistakes sometimes, and we are both so blind, come, let us go down stairs."

"Wait a minute," Coxe replied. "I can locate them by their feathers."

We next find Coxe and Clifford strolling by rivers and streams. Their gaze was fastened upon the pretty fish leaping and darting through the waters. Unfortunately these investigations were brought to a sudden

end. A rainy spell set in and compelled "our men" to keep indoors. Try as they would to blot out old memories, they still had an obstinate aversion to being drenched. To their great delight and surprise their researches suffered no set-back. In an unused room in the house they came across an old aquarium pretty well stocked with fish. They were fascinated. But their daily lessons gradually revealed a marked difference between these fish and other species which they had known. It was true of all things. Every way they turned they encountered new phases of nature. All at once and simultaneously "our men" were startled by an illumination. It was like a great physical pain. They trembled with excitement. They were too modest to look at each other. They clasped hands and stood speechless with emotion. They both understood though no word would come to voice the honor and glory that had been thrust upon them. In a flash they saw their names written in letters of gold on the walls of some future Hall of Fame.

Coxe and Clifford had discovered Our Sister Republic.

Right away the spirit of the explorer possessed them. They determined to move on to the heart of this unknown country. To their amazement there were no obstacles to encounter. A railroad, similar to our Pullman service in comfort and luxury, extending the length and breadth of the land was at their disposal. Our limited space will not allow us even to touch upon the surprises and wonders that were in store for our travellers. Behold! a vast continent stretched out before them. From Maine to Florida, from ocean to ocean outlined just like our own. Arms and peninsulas jutting out at corresponding distances. In the interior the same upheaval of mountain and hill interspersed with placid lake and smiling river. But who on earth knows who we are.

So to be explicit, we will sign ourselves The United States of America.

To make this resemblance more striking this great land was cut up into divisions, sections, states if you please, controlled by a chief executive, vested, for all the world with the same power as our governor. Over all these chiefs again, was a very big man comparing in dignity and importance in his very exalted position to our own president. One thing after another led up to the climax. For, would you believe it, here were all these strange people living under a free, glorious constitution drawn up by some good old patriots when the country was young. They were still satisfied with it and declared that they always intended to adhere to its principles. In accordance with this, every year counselors and advisers from all the states rush to the seat of government to talk over with their president what ought to be done for the good and welfare and happiness of the people. He is real fatherly and will put things right for everybody.

"Our men" learned, too, that there was a lot of undeveloped land tucked away somewhere, full of gold and precious gems which would astonish the world some day. Then a shady story of a wild Indian was sprung upon them, but Coxe and Clifford stiffened themselves up and resolutely refused to listen to a word. Oh, no; The Hague Conference might settle all land limitations and promise that all the great things of the earth shall be shared by all nations, but we must draw the line at our unique possessions and no one with a civic conscience would hear to a mushroom nation claiming our brother. Our brother, the American Indian!

We seriously doubt if any one else would know how to treat him.

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Shades of Columbus! Here is a vexed question for the future historian. Where from out of the firmament did these people come?

Coxe and Clifford were heralded everywhere. Their tragic experience and miraculous escape from a watery grave brought them into the greatest publicity. They received every attention that could be heaped upon a mortal. The freedom of all cities was bestowed upon them. It was a wonder that they did not lose their heads! Their worldly possessions had all been swept away but they were not discouraged. They both had the feeling of men who have plenty of capital to handle. It was true that all their carefully prepared notes, ready to go to press, were lying at the bottom of the sea. They scarcely expected to recover them. Both being gifted with prodigious memories, they reassuringly asserted from day to day that they would begin and write them over again. If by chance an item was overlooked by one no doubt the other could supply it. But, somehow it was a heartless task, and with all the burning enthusiasm of the ardent workmen that they are, time passed and they shrank from taking up their pens. That horrible shipwreck always loomed up before them. Then an inspiration came to each of them at the same moment. These two men were peculiarly affected as you have seen by the same influences and at the same time. They each gave each other a glance (another habit they had fallen into) and read the same purpose in each other's soul. They would report upon these last experiences, adventures, it was hard to find a word adequate for such a lofty theme. Ask yourself, did the prosaic existence of any human being ever come in touch with anything so wonderful, so thrilling! Talk about Fairy Tales and The Arabian Nights, why—why, they

were stale and commonplace in comparison. It was a tax upon their united genius to compose appropriate headlines to prepare the public for these momentous facts. They wanted to spare any one being, too much agitated over their breakfast tables. And this is the hour that news of the world is sprung upon the family.

Equipped with pen and ink and notebook, Coxe and Cliff travelled on. They made friends everywhere and inoculated themselves into the life of the people and their surroundings.

Centuries ago a wise old man attempted to analyze the heart of man. It was a difficult thing to do. The world thought him a trifle hard on his fellows. But here were Coxe and his friend, soft, tender hearted men, just snatched from the jaws of death, and received, mark you, into the bosoms of strangers, the very thing to make a man deaf and blind to human foibles and even to gloss over actual guilt any one would think. But not they. We are ashamed to write it, but here they were, we say, in this twentieth century, endorsing all that the old man said. Moreover, they maintained that in this out of the way country the human heart was torn and pulled by all the conflicting passions that man has been fighting against since he came into possession of his first home in the Garden of Eden. In their precise and methodical manner they then began to enumerate them alphabetically. Such as, envy, hate, malice, but why rehearse—oh, aren't they odious? Coxe and Clifford, always going to the root of things and with their tendency toward sociology, anthropology, psychology and other ologies, of which we are ignorant, bracketed them without a scruple, with a lot of more things as characteristics and intensely human.

Whether it was the angel and devil blending in these

people, we cannot tell, but we do know that they soon proved to be a most profitable and absorbing study to our two scribes. The light burned in their windows to an early hour every morning as they sat scribbling off their impressions at their desks. So assiduously did they apply themselves that they both broke down under the strain and stress and ran up to a famous resort abundantly provided with some kind of a life-giving mineral water a certificate of cure labelled on every bottle. We would say in passing that the public are clamoring for these impressions. In response to our notice that they should soon be forthcoming, before night of that day, every copy was sold. The second edition was bought up on the following morning. We have now given orders to go on with them to the exclusion of all other publications. It is the only way we can meet the demand.

These springs are located in a beautiful part of one of the northern states overlooking the sea. Coxe and Clifford were enrolled without delay in the curriculum of amusements kindly arranged for the guests by the forethought of the proprietor. Strictly speaking, we do not suppose curriculum is the correct word to use just here, but it has an academic flavor and seems to put our men on their proper status, for they were both so scholarly, and everyone will understand, we are sure, just what we mean.

Life began all of a sudden to take on the same hue and color that Coxe and Clifford knew so well at Palm Beach and Bar Harbor. A careless, lighthearted throng streaming forth each morning from the hotel bent on enjoying themselves. Each group content with its own affairs and all satisfied with the world. It was a good place. One glance into their happy faces and glowing eyes told you that.

In their system of life, their advanced civilization, if you will, in fact, in every detail, even to the approximate value of their currency. Our Sister Republic accorded so perfectly with our own that from henceforth we shall drop all local terms and record the daily incidents, to save the tedious process of translation, in simple, good old English.

When we come to think of it, there were not so many things happening just at this time. Interest and attention hung on one absorbing, engrossing topic. As we have already remarked above, Coxe and Clifford were all knocked up and seeking absolute rest. They did not know how to be halfway men in anything, and were never more in earnest than when on a holiday. To ensure immunity from the least mental excitement they actually refrained from reading a newspaper and purposely turned their heads away when they passed the bulletin board. But they could not be blind to the signs of the times. They opened their eyes one morning and saw that the complexion of the springs had changed. The gaiety had vanished. Laughter had ceased. People looked worried, serious and grave. They talked in low voices, nervously, excitedly, angrily, with clenched hands and menacing mien. An alarm note had sounded. The dullest of onlookers could see that. Coxe and Clifford grasped the situation in a twinkling. This was no individual cry. A universal chord had been touched. Both men ran wildly to a newsstand, grabbed a paper and in perfect silence sat down to read. The headlines told the tale. The times were sick. The government wanted money. It must come from somewhere. A genius of a senator had solved the problem. It was no original device. But he was wise and his word had been the enacted law. How the people had loved, trusted and followed him—and now——!

"All this rumpus about a tax!" Coxe was saying to himself. "It's fair and just." He read on.

"To be imposed in times of peace and war." A voice spoke at his elbow.

"We shall be exempt," some one replied. "We are not millionaires."

"Why, man, do you hear? It is an income tax. Exempt! I tell you no one who makes a decent living."

"Is this true, is this true?" the first speaker asked in broken accents and plaintively, pointing to his dark glasses, exclaimed, "You see I can't read."

"The word has come that the bill is going to pass," his friend explained.

"I must stop the wedding," he cried, excitedly, jumping up.

"The wedding! What are you talking about?" the other asked testily.

"Charles'! My son Charles' wedding?" he replied. "He has been waiting for years for the requisite income for a gentleman to marry on, and now he has it, and he deserves it. Charles is an industrious fellow, but—but, he can't assume new obligations if it is to be cut a dollar short," and with a sudden jerk he turned and went tottering down the terrace to despatch a message to his son.

In less than an hour the corridors presented an amazing spectacle. People were rushing up and down in search of friends. Every one was seeking some one to weep with and to pour out their lamentations together. Oh, the pathos of it! Two distracted souls eager to receive and bestow sympathy lost no time in informing each other of the impending doom. Left alone and recovering from the first shock, one of these maidens sat down quietly and coolly to think it out. Her face was colorless and her hands were clasped convul-

sively together. Her economies had reached the limit in the scale of existence. She would like to have lived longer. In her quiet, simple way life was still very sweet. There was no one to turn to, but she must not repine. The spirit of mortal must be "up and ready for any fate." She was driven from the earth. She dared not to deliberate. It was not a voluntary crime. With a fixed determined look she rose, caught up some pictures of loved ones, from her bureau, and pressed them passionately to her lips. With a wistful look in her eyes she laid them fondly under her pillow. Glancing about once more she seized a bodkin and opening an artery with a suppressed sob threw herself across the bed. The last conscious sound she heard in this world was a pistol shot from the adjoining room. It did not signify. Only another lonely, isolated soul, with starvation staring her in the face, had sealed her own fate. Her final act was one of beneficence. With trembling fingers she had willed the weapon that had ended her miseries to a little orphaned cousin to perform the same kindly office when the exigency should require it of her.

It was amazing with what rapidity and secrecy the proprietor boxed all that was mortal of his two late lamented guests to a Funeral Director's Establishment in the nearest city to be buried at his expense. The same train carried away three hopeless lunatics in care of a strong guard to spend the rest of their days in a mad house. Until within a few hours they had passed for devoted, loving, pre-eminently sane pater familias.

It would never do to have these tragedies known throughout the hôtel and cottage colony. The ruin and disaster following could not be imaged in words. So silence was enforced and the proprietor diverted his energies to provide some unusual entertainment in the ball room that evening. But it proved to be a dreary

affair and unperceived Coxe and Clifford withdrew at an early hour. It would border on the sentimental to say that "our men" were personally affected by these melancholy events. But both possessed finely organized brains, delicate sensibilities and nerves highly keyed and they would not have been human if they had not been susceptible to the gloom and danger prevailing.

In the vicinity of their rooms they had previously been exempt from all sounds. So impressive had the quiet and stillness been, that they frequently forebore an inclination to a midnight chat. With the lowering influence of the ball room clinging to them, they parted in the corridor with a nod and each retreated to his own room. Coxe had no sooner turned the key in his door than he heard voices. Every word came as clearly articulated as if no wall existed. The voices were unmistakably those of women. One said dejectedly:

"What are we going to do, Letty? We can't die. I won't kill myself for any government, no, I won't. The ancient women with all their zealous and ardent patriotism, did not do that."

"They gave their sons," Letty interposed.

"Oh, if we had something to give!" the other cried despairingly.

"Only one thing is needed, money, money! and we have none to give, oh, Susie, how cold and cruel the world is! Only the other morning I was returning from the spring and had taken that lonely path, hidden away by the trees and tall bushes, and just as I turned the sharp curve, you know the one I mean."

"Perfectly, dear, do tell me what happened?"

"Why didn't that old Mr. Harnac appear with his broad hat and white hair flowing."

"That nice old man, with such a benevolent countenance and sunlit eyes, he must be a dear old soul."

"You think so, do you? so did I," Letty replied interrogatively.

"How did he offend you, dear, this is so strange? but, go on."

"Now, Susie, what would you say if a dear kind old man stopped you and asked you what your income was? I ask you, what would you say?"

"I don't know what to think—what I should say, but Letty, dear, there could be only one motive—he wanted to give advice, to suggest something to our advantage," Susie asserted in a mollifying tone.

"That is what I thought, such a good place to talk you know, not a creature in sight and believing that he would sympathize and understand, I—I told him."

"Two thousand dollars," he repeated, "enough for any single woman——"

"What a mean, narrow, puny little soul he must have," Susie interrupted. "I hate him, yes, I do; don't look at me in that way, I wonder what he thinks we are made of. Two dry sticks! Without an impulse, no emotion, no yearnings! Oh—oh, and our heart just going out all the time. How we squeeze and pinch for our little charities and strive, Letty, strive, to keep up appearances, for we are ladies, ladies to our finger tips, and know what is becoming. If I only had a chance to talk to him! But, Letty, what did you say?"

"He didn't give me time to speak, right away, he turned on his heel and walked away. I sprang forward and put out my arms to pull him back, to make him listen, it was on the end of my tongue to tell him that we had to drink as much water in one week as he drank in six; but, Susie, I had just finished my twelfth glass and somehow my stomach turned from the water that morning, and I had hesitated—hesitated when I held my last glass in my hand, whether to throw it away or

drink it, but I said to myself, "No, no, the whole virtue of the dose may be in the last drop? So I swallowed it. And, Susie, I was wearing that lavender voile gown, the one cousin Lou gave me, and it was always something of a squeeze, in fact dear, a good deal of a squeeze and at the first quick movement I made, I thought it would burst and tear into ribbons, so there I stood, watching Mr. Harnac walking away; oh, Susie, do you hear? This dear old man with his sun-lit eyes walking away comfortable in both body and soul, while I was enduring an agony, fearful that every pore would spill."

"Waste no more words on him," her sister interjected. "He thinks we are made of different clay from himself, and that we do not wish or need or even know of the things that are his daily toys. What do these people think of us? What do they really think, I wonder?" she cried indignantly.

"Oh, Susie," Letty rejoined in a lighter tone, "you know that I've always loved pretty things and wasn't it nice last winter to walk into that shop like other people? For once I just felt like one of them and life seemed so bright, so gay! Do you remember how we moved around from case to case looking at the beautiful things? Oh, my, it was for all the world like a museum. I shall never forget my sensations—it was just delicious, to make my way out with that present in my hand, such a pretty, tiny pin, five dollars, wasn't it? Well, Susie, it was worth it, we thought so then, you remember, and determined to come some day and buy another, when we had saved—saved enough—and now I do believe all those pleasant sensations must have been pride and that this tax—this horrid income tax has come as a retribution."

"Letty," Susie broke out oratorically, "everything is clear to me now. There is one thing to do. You recol-

lect, do you not, that the doctor said after our last illness that we must drink this water or die? Well, we have economized at both ends for years—did I say at both? At all, I mean, to bolster up during the summer to survive the winter. Now let us stop and never budge from the city again. We shall die, of course, but it will not be suicide, it will be the inevitable.”

“If it could come together,” Susie wailed.

“Be heroic,” Letty said, sharply. “Don’t quarrel with our destiny, from this moment quench sentiment; each of us must welcome death, knowing that it opens the way for the other to live.”

“What could I do without you?” Susie moaned.

“Do you forget, Susie, that scientists tell us that the last grain of sand rounds out the desert, the last drop of water fills up the ocean and on this principle, your dollar, your last dollar would keep the republic afloat.”

“Oh, Letty, what is the universe to me compared to you?” Susie faltered.

There was a slight movement which is the same all the world over when two women rush into each other’s arms. Low, stifled sobs followed, growing fainter and fainter.

All through this talk Coxe had stood leaning on an armchair an enforced listener, afraid that even a step forward might cause some discomfort to these two distressed, lonely women. With the image of them both in tears, he was completely upset. Once or twice he was actually on the point of tapping on the wall to offer some comfort. But was there ever a man with such a nice appreciation of “*les convenables*”? And fortunately his instinct did not desert him and the neighborly impulse was checked and he sank quietly into the chair by his side. Coxe had never remembered to have seen these two women, but he had no difficulty in recognizing them

when they next appeared among the throng of guests. Observing with peculiar interest the brave front they assumed to dissemble the agony that was gnawing at their hearts, he thanked his good star that he had kept silent. What a brutal shock it would have been to have invaded upon their privacy. And, after all, what could he do or say?

It was late when Coxe and Clifford strolled out of the dining-room the next morning. They were instantly joined by a young man who was inclined to talk. He had attracted their attention on their arrival and without knowing how it had come about, they had frequently exchanged cordial greetings. He had a striking personality and bore a resemblance to no less a personage than the great Napoleon. Singularly enough this likeness was again emphasized in the similarity of their names. So far on in life, however, our young Napolis had devoted his strength and talents to gratifying his own ease and pleasure. He was not above deriving infinite satisfaction in being considered the best dressed man in the Republic. Between ourselves he was something of a dude. So it was in keeping with his attitude towards life to scorn mentioning the threatened income tax or any such minor grievance as topics of conversation. If the truth must be told, a lighter and a gladder theme was not unwelcome to our men.

With our knowledge of the tragedies that were daily—nay, hourly—occurring it seems heartless that one could smile and to laugh outright positively brutal. In our land and under our government, whose very pact is the essence of brotherhood stimulating one and all to live and die for the good of each other, such a condition could not exist. News flies so quickly that in face of a calamity the whole nation is cast into gloom. But,

even in our judgment we must be fair and remember that at these springs an embargo had been put upon every lip not to spread bad news or refer to ghastly subjects. The fiat, though unspoken, was none the less rigid. All the company bowed in acquiescence and tried to look unconcerned and easy in their minds.

Compelled under this sense of duty the men allowed themselves to glide into an agreeable and animated discussion. While all three were laughing heartily an old man appeared on the end of the piazza. He at once made himself comfortable in a large arm chair that was evidently appropriated for his use alone. He was a familiar figure and generally to be found in this corner. He could not escape the notice of any one.

Napolis turned his head at this moment, stopped short in the middle of a sentence, and indicating the old man by a look and gesture, said:

"He is the Wizard of the Springs, refuses himself to all acquaintances except celebrities. Think I shall be introduced."

"Do," said Coxe, encouragingly, "don't waste time."

No further impetus was needed. Napolis darted over to an habitu  of the Springs with whom he was on most friendly terms and buttonholing him to command his attention, communicated his wish.

"Nothing could be easier," his friend replied. "There he is now."

The next moment Napolis stood before the Wizard.

Napolis was never at a loss for something to say. In his youth he was an ardent hero worshipper and was painfully shy and timid. This unusual phase in one so active and alert evoked constant comment from his elders. No one suspected that it originated in a silent and secret regret—if not mortification that his father was not eligible to any of the patriotic societies that were

making such a noise in the world at this time. Not an ancestor slain in battle! Not a feudal chief a distant cousin, who had restored a kingdom to his sovereign! By the time he was through college he began to open his eyes. He discovered his father was dictator in his own realm. The Prince's Own Kin, The Royal Mosaics, and The Pit-Pat Society, whatever that may mean, attempted no enterprise, started no movement without his sanction. In finance and politics his dictum was law. Napolis' attitude changed. He was a philosopher. He asked himself what did it really matter after all, whether "one was in it or of it, so he was one of them?" He no longer sought for a hero. He worshipped at his father's shrine.

Slowly but surely Napolis began to realize his own importance in the world. If a pedigree had assumed abnormal proportions in his estimation, he discovered gradually that a yacht, polo ponies, four-in-hand and a touring car were tolerable substitutes for heraldic devices and this foolish, sentimental yearning ceased to be felt as completely as if it had never existed. Granting all these accessories, we cannot ignore the man. It is doubtful if any one ever possessed such magneticism, such a genius for making friends. Talk about diplomacy! He was brimful of it. We mean, as we understand it, having that remarkable faculty of making the world pleased with itself and appearing himself pleased with everybody. A genial, good humor prevailed wherever he was. It was no wonder that he was in such demand. No cotillion was quite perfect, didn't come up to the mark, unless he was head of it. This was only one instance in which he showed his superiority over other men. An average man would have fallen dead. Why he did not, no one can tell.

Expatiating even at the peril of being tedious upon

Napolis' tact and usual command of words and topics, it will sound incredible to say that there he stood before that old man, tongue-tied, silent, mute. His mind a perfect blank. It was evident that the Wizard did not intend to help him. Indeed, he increased his embarrassment by setting two eyes upon him in a merciless stare as if he would read him inside out. He could not run away. He must say something. Finally without heeding his words he blurted out a commonplace politeness:

"I am so glad to meet you; I've heard so much about you."

An imperceptible nod was the only acknowledgment.

Another pause.

Napolis thought of his father. This could not fail to be on the right line.

"Of course you know my father," he said, sure of comprehension.

"No," came cut and dried.

Not know his father! Everyone in the universe was proud to know his father. This was a snub he could brook from no one. His eloquence returned. He fairly plunged. He never stopped until he had hoisted his father on to the highest pillar ever erected by man.

The Wizard was mute. His eyes fairly pierced to Napolis' soul.

Never before had Napolis lost faith in himself. He was crushed.

At last the Oracle spoke. Napolis thrilled from head to foot. It was a voice to remember, charged with beauty and majesty. What he said was matter of fact enough.

"Young man sit down," he began. "In my city, the greatest city on this continent, when I was young I

could count all of the millionaires on my fingers. Each one was a noted man, rare and peculiar qualities were attributed to them, people held their breath and turned to look at them when they passed. We know differently now, we could not count them, their name is legion. Don't ask how they make their money, they would rather tell you themselves, but it is a fact that cannot be denied that they are no longer an anomaly; they have even ceased to interest us, they go to and fro and we do not raise our eyes. Yes, your father is high up on the list, his life has been effective, he has not wasted his time. Up to this moment, you, do you hear, you have dallied with toys. Stop! Work! Be a man. Stand alone. Will you please lean forward?"

Napolis was inwardly raging, but disguising his feelings bent over wondering what on earth the old man was going to do. The next instant he felt a hand pass slowly over his head, then with a wave of his arm, the Wizard signified that he had finished.

Napolis sat upright staring now in his turn at the Seer.

"You have a destiny to fulfil," the Oracle continued deliberately, "it is not to heap up millions. You must serve your country. I have proposed your name for candidate to Congress. You will be elected." He stopped and looked at the sun in the clear sky above, lowering his eyes, he said: "The train starts at twelve o'clock; you have time to catch it; go, take your seat, defeat this bill—this income tax. It has not passed, it must not."

"Impossible," Napolis exclaimed, jumping to his feet, "I can't speak. I am no orator. Now, if you had asked me to lead——"

"You have struck it," the old man interposed, "to lead men. Don't pick your words, speak from your heart; keep your end in view; you will carry it through."

Napolis had a theory, there may be some truth in it, that in the presence of great and lofty souls a man could never lapse in his morals, so as he lived constantly in the society of his valets he bestowed upon them the names of two heroes of be-dimmed antiquity who had pleased his youthful fancy. Being a good and generous master, the men answered to these names without asking for any explanation, regarding it simply as one of Napolis' many whims. Impelled forward by the words of the Wizard, Napolis rushed to his rooms and called aloud: "Apollo! Achilles!" and seemingly out of space two men sprang before him.

"Pack me up," he said, "follow on the next train. I go on this."

He passed through the open door, and without another word walked rapidly away. The men knew him too well to press their services upon him. They were accustomed to change of plan and short orders, but this new ring in their master's voice was ominous of some unusual movement. They at once bestirred themselves and in a few minutes the room presented a bewildering confusion which under their skilful manipulation was shortly reduced to order and trunks and boxes packed stood ready to go.

While Napolis was speeding on to the Seat of Government our men had gone for a walk. Involuntarily they strolled into a path leading to the cliffs. These high, rocky walls overlooked a short, narrow stretch of seaboard. Sharp, deep ravines, flat table rocks and long pointed promontories broke the uniformity of the coast line. It was a favorite resort of Coxe and Clifford. Here they came singly and together to watch and wait for some ocean liner that would pick them up and carry them back to their native land. But one view always greeted them. The vast, boundless desolate solitude of

the ocean. To-day, as was their wont, they walked on to the edge of the foremost rock and looked out and down and above. They could scarcely believe their senses. The one little arm of land jutting out to sea was congested with humanity. The woman of fashion stood alongside of the country dame. The farmer's thrift was manifested in over filled baskets of fowls and potatoes. Heaps of baggage were carelessly thrown about, and groups of people were eagerly scanning the horizon with field glasses and telescopes. Others again had mounted upon their trunks and with a confident air were challenging attention by a furious waving of handkerchiefs, towels, or anything at hand. Sobs and groans mingled with cheering and laughing. Altogether they were a queer lot.

Before Coxe and Clifford could decide what it all meant their attention was aroused by a sudden, swift breezy motion. They stepped back and turning around saw a most marvellous apparition rapidly approaching. They stood still and stared with unfeigned astonishment. Coxe spoke first.

"What have we here?" he asked.

"It's some sort of a flying machine," Clifford answered.

"The invention is unknown in the States," Coxe said.

"Or anywhere else," said Clifford.

"Look," Coxe said.

"That's what I am doing," Cliff returned.

"It's flesh and blood," Coxe said.

"You are not far wrong," said Clifford.

On and on, faster and faster came this extraordinary being. At nearer range it assumed a more definite form. It was some kind of a perpendicular trunk with outstretched arms over which were thrown gauze, chif-

fon, stoles and boas. Two hats dangled from either hand. The head was crushed under a pyramidal mushroom of feathers. At the peril of impending strangulation non-de-script garments were tied around the throat. A girdle of ribbon freighted with silver ornaments and favors was thrown over the shoulders. It was soon abreast of the men.

"It's a thief, a sneak thief," Clifford gasped with suppressed excitement. "He has run off with a lot of woman's clothes."

"One of the meanest things a man can do," Coxe said, "they are of no use to him."

"We must arrest him in the name of the law," Cliff urged, advancing a step.

"Hold on," Coxe said, laying a detaining hand on his arm. "Another mistake, old boy; don't you see, she is a lady of fashion, up to the topmost notch."

Cliff looked his astonishment.

"Yes," Coxe continued, "I saw the plate this morning——"

"What nation is responsible," Cliff broke out, "for victimizing the women in this way?"

"Paris, Paris, but 'pon my word, Cliff, I thought it was a cartoon from the States."

"Has she come?" the figure cried in great agitation.

"Who, Madame?" Clifford asked, hastening to her assistance, and with a sweep of his arm relieving her of the wing-like appurtenances that were beginning to entangle her steps.

"Who?" she called back scornfully. "The ship of course. Am I late? I had no time to get ready, I've just heard, don't you know, we are all going to America!"

"My dear Madame," Clifford began again in his most

conciliating manner, "I don't wish to discourage you, but no ship——"

"Then I am not late, after all," catching a glance of the doubt in his face, she fairly screamed triumphantly, "we are sure the ship is coming; Mr. Octolus dreamed it last night and his dreams always come true."

It was of no use to attempt to stop her in her flight and interjecting from time to time cautious admonitions on the danger of their rather tortuous path, Clifford preceded her down the hill.

Coxe stood dumb and speechless on the heights. The next moment he was startled by a crunching, grinding noise behind him. Instinctively he drew back, then followed a creaking and a groaning. The light around him had suddenly darkened. He looked up and saw a trunk whizzing through the air. His face became ashen, but his heart warmed as he realized that only by a special interposition of Providence had he escaped decapitation on the spot. Recovering from his surprise and breathing freely he emerged from his shadow and watched it lodge on the ledge below. By an unaccountable rebound it tipped over onto a smooth, round boulder, then gliding and tumbling it fell into a deep, black pool below. A splash, a thud! That was the last of the trunk.

It occurred to Coxe that the owner must be near by and looking about he encountered the fat woman of the Springs. Among such a throng of acquaintances, Coxe had previously neglected to meet her. She explained at once that alone and unassisted she had entered upon a race for freedom and liberty. She had managed to drag her trunk to the edge of the cliff but could not attempt the descent on the steep and narrow path. But not discouraged she had proceeded to expedite its progress by a desperate kick, relying upon a series of

these performances to ensure its safe arrival at the sea level.

She was a pitiable object to behold. The wind was playing all sorts of pranks with her white blouse and ribbons. Her hair was awry, face red. She was panting for breath, blowing and puffing like an engine. The perspiration was streaming down from every pore. But her eyes glowed with happiness and she cried out cheerily to Coxe "that she must hurry on to claim her trunk." The melancholy duty of communicating the sad fate of that ill-starred trunk fell upon Coxe. She listened in blank amazement, her lips trembled, the color forsook her, then with a little cry she fell down and sobbed. Coxe did not interrupt her. He told her that it would do her good. He stood by waiting until her tears subsided. When she was a little calmed, he helped her up and led her to a fountain to revive her spirits by washing off her face and hands with cool, clear water. In lieu of a towel he drew out an unused handkerchief and held it towards her. The poor woman's discomfiture was indescribable when she offered to return it. She saw at a glance that it had lost its immaculate freshness.

"Don't mention it," said Coxe, in his magnificent way, "it is of no consequence. I beg of you to keep it as a souvenir of this auspicious occasion."

During these months of exile Coxe had not lost his true American spirit, and, at this present moment, he was in a terrible hurry. He wanted to look up Cliff. They had been separated for several hours. A most unusual circumstance. But by the sympathy he manifested and the way he put aside all his own feelings, no one would have thought that he had anything on his mind. Least of all this woman, a nameless stranger. So inspired was she by his presence that she begged

him to stay and talk awhile. She wanted advice. At once he was all attention and had assumed an easy, complaisant attitude.

She was in a dilemma, she admitted. Coxe did not have to be told that. "When she arrived in New York——" and broke off with a disparaging gesture at her trickled white waist.

Coxe was not to be undone by a trifle like that, and in a flash answered, "Buy another."

"Really?" she exclaimed, her courage returning. "They are sold in the Republic, but in the United——"

"Yes," Coxe asseverated stoutly, "I remember to have seen one exhibited in a shop window, with 'Sold' marked on it, that it implied that they were to be the rage and more were being made."

"At—at moderate prices?" she faltered.

"They will make the price to suit you, but you ought to arrive at New York when an 'occasion' is going on, then you can have a choice for—for almost a sou."

Her face brightened. But Coxe turned his away and passed a hand over his forehead as one still in doubt. He was on untrodden ground, but he said to himself, "Waists are sold, made and worn in New York, a man must believe his own eyes."

Tailor-made suits came under discussion next. Coxe showed no hesitation on this subject. They could be bought anywhere. Detecting that she was eager to pour forth a volley of questions and wishing to avoid any further complications, "Don't worry," he said quickly, "don't worry, for you can buy everything you want, all in one shop."

"In one shop," she repeated, "how very large it must be."

"Mrs. Coxe will initiate you into our shopping methods, it is the most absorbing occupation; I assure you

the ladies find shopping a continual pic-nic in the States."

It was only natural for Coxe to embrace the first opportunity that came in his way to make some feeble return for the kindness and hospitality that had been showered upon him. And, despite his hurry, he watched the fat woman advance toward the little path that led to the throng by the water's edge. She could not be dissuaded from making the attempt. He offered to go with her. She declined this courtesy on his part. She would make the descent alone. Coxe remained on the spot looking over the cliff. The last view of her breadth of back filled him with a sense of guilt. Borrow? Buy? Preposterous! Impossible! But it was not probable that there would be any call for his promise to be verified for the present. His land was beyond the horizon. The ship had not come.

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While Coxe and Clifford lingered at the Springs, Napolis was hurrying on to take his place among the lawmakers of the country. There was one thing "our men" never fathomed. To this day they could tell you nothing about it. That is just how elections were managed in Our Sister Republic. It must have been by a species of telepathy that has not as yet reached us. We can only state the fact that Napolis was soon at work. Surely no man was ever put more upon his mettle.

He had no idea of the expenses of living. He had always drawn upon overflowing coffers without a thought. Now he determined to start from the average man. He was at a loss to know how to go to work. All at once he remembered a consin who was under obligations to his father. He could rely upon him for assistance. He was reputed to be worth a million. Here was a start-

ing point. He could build up or build down as the case required.

In a few days Napolis was at home. The next morning he made a hasty breakfast and immediately afterwards drove to the office of his cousin. By some good fortune he found him alone with a half hour to spare. He lost no time in explaining his errand. He was there for political reasons, he told him, that he could not divulge at present, but it would be a great accommodation to know how he parted with his income.

His cousin was somewhat dazed. His brow contracted and his face was puzzled. He showed an utter inability to grasp the question at once.

Napolis hastened to enlighten him. "How much have you, how do you spend it, and what have you left at the end of the year, to be brief?"

"There should be no secrets between us," his cousin replied promptly, with the atmosphere clarified, "I understand, my year's expenses, that's what you want."

"Yes," Napolis said doubtfully, but to himself he mused, "if I am to defeat this bill I must know what I am about; in other words, the varied and imperative demands upon an average family man."

"You shall have it in a minute," his cousin pursued, and unlocking a casement he drew down a blank book from a shelf and turning to a certain page, said, "Here's the whole matter itemized. Draw up a chair."

Napolis assented cheerfully as his eye lit upon a long list of objects. With the book open on the desk, both men sat down before it.

"We'll begin at the top," his cousin resumed, picking up a pencil, "and go down the line; it will be a fair sample how money is distributed in hundreds of families."

Napolis leaned over and followed the pencil point as

the figures one by one were marked off. He read:

Living expenses	\$15,000
Educational	10,000
Poor relatives	5,000
Hospitals (20)	1,500
Homes, Old Men, Old Ladies, Childrens	1,500
Tickets by application	2,000
Amateur performances in aid of reform and bettering conditions generally:	
Prison society	500
Fresh air fund	500
Asylums	500
Church charities	1,000
Memorial window	1,000
Famine fund	1,000
Earthquake sufferers	1,000
Doctor's bills	1,000
Dentist bills	800
Opera seats	1,000
Taxes	2,000
Engagement presents	500
Wedding gifts	2,000
Xmas turkeys for poor	500
Flowers for funerals and festivals.....	500
Emergency fund	1,200
	<hr/>
	\$50,000

When the list was completed, Napolis looked aghast.

"What have you to say?" his cousin asked.

"I confess that I am staggered. Such a giving out and so few personal expenses. Amusements almost nil; nothing assigned for travelling."

"Travel! We cannot afford it. The boys go to and fro from college and my daughters—the two eldest—have their regular trips to school."

"There is an omission of any football fund—with your young people."

"We must draw the line somewhere, if they are not invited, they do not go."

"You give very liberally to all charities."

"Well, now, Napolis, that is the nicest thing I have had said to me for a long time. People think I don't give half enough; when I send fifty they want a hundred and when I give a hundred they want a thousand."

"Practically you saved nothing last year."

"There you are mistaken, my surplus——"

"Yes, I see; that emergency fund; I'm not curious, but I must be exact, is it appropriated——" Napolis faltered.

"Don't hesitate to ask questions; it just means a ready sum at hand for appendicitis, auto-accidents and trolley upsets; they come to someone every day, why not to us," he said cheerily.

The time had come for Napolis to sound. He asked in a matter-of-fact way: "Are you disturbed by the prospect of an income tax?"

"Disturbed! I should think so—do you know what it means to us?" He shook his head and a shadow passed over his face. "We must give up the opera, and music is my only solace. My wife and I have been talking it over and, if the bill passes, there is but one resource," the words came out reluctantly, painfully, "I—I must buy a Victor."

Napolis grasped his hand and expressed the sympathy that the circumstances called for and left him with the conviction borne in upon him that no millionaire with a wife to support and six children to bring up in

a becoming manner could possibly carry another burden.

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As we know, Napolis was deadly in earnest, and had no time to waste. He jumped into his carriage and drove rapidly to the house of a friend who was classed among the multi-millionaires. For a brief moment he indulged in an introspective mood and the carriage stopped suddenly before he was aware of his surroundings. He looked up with amazement. The windows were closed and the house empty. A big sign ran across the front wall with letters written large: "For Sale."

Utterly bewildered he peered up and down the street with a wild stare as if seeking explanation from the silent stones. Just as he was moving on a man emerged from the door of the adjoining house. Napolis recognized him as a man whom he had seen at the Club. He was not personally acquainted with him, but he alighted and advancing quickly arrested his steps.

"Where have you been?" the man asked. "It is a sad, sad story," he repeated, bowing his head and making a deprecatory gesture with his hands. "The floods have destroyed his five million dollar railway in the gold regions and his mine is valueless—valueless; fortune all gone," accompanied by another shrug.

"And Egeria, his daughter!" Napolis faltered.

"You know her? A magnificent girl; buoyant, hopeful, trying to support the family!"

"Where can I find them?" Napolis implored in agitated tones.

The stranger scribbled some words on a slip of paper, handed it to Napolis and the two men separated.

This was news, indeed. Napolis was visibly affected. A strange pallor crept into his face and more than ever

he was determined to execute the command of the wizard.

That day wrought a wonderful awakening in Napolis. Late in the afternoon he stopped before his Club, tired and weary, and sensible of the pangs of hunger. He was a miracle to himself! To have lived in touch with humanity and to have kept aloof from "all sorts and conditions of men"!

He entered the reading-room at an hour when one usually finds it empty. On the threshold he ran across an old friend of his father. We could not venture an estimate of his wealth. In the Republic he was reputed to be the richest man in the world. He had always known Napolis and liked the boy. As they encountered each other now, he acknowledged his graceful greeting and made to pass on. Then something held him back and he stopped and put out his hand. He appeared listless, careworn and distressed. Napolis was aware that he was a bachelor with nothing in the world to worry about and he feared that something must be wrong. As soon as they had exchanged a few words, he inquired with particular solicitude after his health.

"I tell you, young man," he replied, pouring himself out at once, "it requires more genius to disperse money than to achieve it. I am resolved to die a poor man and though I keep on giving, giving, giving, I don't seem to get any poorer."

Napolis caught a lapel by either hand and pinioned him against the wall, and, setting his eyes and looking into his very soul, said: "Don't bother yourself any longer, give it to the nation; tear down once and forever this brandishing sword hanging over the heads of the widow and orphan, the weak and incapable, the poor and unfortunate, and make your name immortal."

"What, what, Napolis, you mean——"

"The income tax," Napolis interposed.

"Why, Napolis; why, you surprise me; I shall not feel it, an infinitesimal fraction——"

"Large enough to paralyze the nation," Napolis interjected again, "the people are frightened; they do not know what will come next."

"Has not everyone enough to eat, clothes to wear—this is terrible? I had no idea, really—such a state of affairs. The fact is," his face twitched and his monocle fell from his eye; catching it in his hand he began to rub it furiously with his loose kid glove, "The fact is," he repeated, "I'm nearsighted and can only see half the world."

Napolis leaned over and whispered something in his ear.

"You, you!" he ejaculated, and holding him at arms' length he scanned him from head to foot. His eyes twinkled with mischief, an amused smile played around his mouth, but he said indulgently, "Why, Napolis, you are only a boy, but go ahead, fight the people's bill, and if you stamp it out, I—I will."

He went out of the room chuckling.

At some future day we shall hear how he kept his word.

The momentous morning dawned on which Napolis was to make his maiden speech in the Senate. It is a great temptation to quote and give the line of argument he presented. But it would scarcely be fair to Coxe and Clifford. They have set their hearts in giving it to the world intact for the first time. But it is no infraction upon their confidence, and indeed it will only anticipate interest to say that it was just what we might have expected from him. When the last word fell

from his lips Napolis sat down amid tremendous applause, and the old walls had never echoed with such wild cheering.

The first thing that Napolis did when he was at liberty was to telegraph to the Wizard of the Springs.

No one ever knew what the second thing was. He never told. But we have our surmises. Rumor has it that Napolis is going to settle down and marry, and devote his genius to his country and the people of his land. His bride-elect is not rich, but she is noble, beautiful, and good.

Coxe and Clifford happened to be talking to the Old Man when the telegram arrived. It only contained two words:

“BILL DEFEATED.

“NAPOLIS.”

With his eyes gleaming and his old withered face aglow with triumph, he passed it on to them to read. “There’s a patriot! There’s a statesman. I knew he could do it; he was only waiting for someone to turn the crank,” he said. He wrote his reply, then fell back in his chair for a rest.

Our men rushed to the office to dispatch it. Brevity was likewise its distinguishing feature. It read:

“YOU HAVE SAVED THE REPUBLIC.

“OLD FATHER TIME.”

At breakfast the next morning the proprietor at the Springs announced that there would be a great demonstration to celebrate Napolis’ victory. It was going to be held in the auditorium at 11 o’clock. In a twinkling all was tumult and confusion. Carpenters and upholsterers were at work with the decorations. Bunting and flags were lavishly displayed. Everywhere the colors of the Republic were flying. Judges and lawyers had

promised to make speeches. The best musical talent in the house would take part. At the end of the services all were invited to a collation that would be served at little tables on the magnificent lawn, the orchestra discoursing national airs all the while.

The birds sang merrily. The sky was bright. The sun shone. The earth was radiant. Everybody was happy. The late gloom and misery were forgotten. Women embraced and kissed each other. Men were melted to tears. All ceremony was banished. Such a bowing and scraping! Shaking hands all around, then beginning over again as the Germans sometimes do when they are a little absent minded.

It may seem a bit mawkish to say that in the midst of these festivities "our men" could not get the Fourth of July out of their heads. They were cast down and wondered if they should ever see their native land again. Not for the world would they let a shadow fall over that joyous assembly, but think of it; is there anything harder than to look on with a sympathetic eye and ready smile at a national jubilee when one's heart is breaking? So, feeling that they were out of place, for it is of no use to disguise it, they were downright homesick, and in momentary fear that they would blubber out like babies, and then where would be all the boasted reserve and control of the American gentleman? So, late in the afternoon when the guests had begun to scatter, they wandered off to the cliffs. They did not by word or look betray themselves to each other, but the way they linked arms they knew that the same sense of isolation was drawing them closer together than they had ever been before.

We have already remarked that both of our men respected the mood of the other and standing on the highest rock of the great stonewall, they clung together in

silence. Their gaze focused on one spot on the distant sea. Their thoughts traveling way beyond. Suddenly they both gave a start. What? Could it be? At last! Yes, a speck loomed up in the dim horizon. Clifford gave Coxe's arm an affectionate clutch and ran back to the hotel. Coxe understood and remained rooted to the spot, overwhelmed with emotions better imagined than described. In a shorter time than it takes to tell it Clifford was at Coxe's side again, handing him the field glasses. Coxe would never have thought of refusing. This would have offended Clifford. Way back in his family annals they counted a French ancestor and all through these generations their manners had been regulated by the canons of the old Parisian court, and anyone who knows anything about French etiquette knows also the stress that is laid upon precedence especially when it is a matter of age. Heretofore, our men had jocularly called themselves twins. At this supreme moment they adhered to the truth. Clifford actually bowed to his senior in passing the glasses to him. Coxe was one whole day older. No doubt Coxe had profited by assimilating with Clifford, for it is all the more to his credit that without a claim to a French ancestor he showed such consideration. He held the glasses just long enough for one hasty look. Then without a word solemnly put them into Clifford's hands. In an instant Clifford turned round and both men gazed into each other's face. Their eyes glowed with joy and hope. They both exclaimed simultaneously, "The Stars and Stripes! Yankee Doodle! Home!!" With visions of wives and children rising up before them, their hearts gave hammer beats against their sides, and both gulping down a sob fell upon one another's neck.

There was no time to lose. A signal must be run up. But Our Sister Republic had no neighbors. She

had never exchanged international courtesies. She was unknown. So our men had to depend upon their own invention. Instinctively they pulled out their handkerchiefs. Something deep down in those pockets had made them so limp that they would not take the wind. A happy thought! There were those menu cards. Quick as a flash Coxe broke off some twigs, and pinned their cards to the end, and both men standing on the foremost rock waved frantically. For once Coxe's emotion mastered him. He snatched the twig out of Clifford's hand and jumped onto a boulder at the peril of his life, and waved with both hands as a man has never waved before. Clifford kept his arms around him and held him safe. From time to time he called out, "All right up there?" and bravely Coxe answered, "I—I think so, but don't let go."

Understand, please, that that boat was going at full speed in the opposite direction. The captain said afterwards that all of a sudden he felt queer sensations creeping up his back. Then such a lugging at his coat! He turned sharply and saw Coxe standing as high as heaven. He wanted to know that man. And he could no more resist wheeling round than he could stem the ocean's currents.

It was soon known throughout the hotel that our government, the United States, had heard of the whereabouts of our fugitives and had sent a Man of War to bring them home. So absurd! Such an exaggeration! Perhaps it is a little mean of us to tell it, but it is just another illustration that our journals are the only ones in which reports and news are given with absolute truth.

The excitement was tremendous. Everyone vied with each other to give them a suitable "send off." Coxe and Clifford were laden with tokens of affection and re-

gard. They entertained serious doubts that this extra cargo would be shipped. But they never mentioned it but kept on thanking everyone from their hearts and never stopped shaking hands, not knowing what they said or not hearing what anyone else said, but conscious all the time of a lofty virtue in doing the proper thing. Finally, when everyone had been remembered and Coxe had his foot on the ladder to descend, the vast crowd swayed apart and made way for a young girl who was rushing madly forward. She wore a soft, white tissue gown, and her golden tresses were flying in the wind. In her hand she flourished a pistol aloft. It was a terrific moment. But Coxe, with that intrepid spirit of his, did not quail. He stepped back quickly and approached her smiling, holding out both hands, saying cheerfully:

"This is very good of you, I'm sure, another moment would have been too late."

"Take it, take it," she said, as soon as she recovered breath, and bringing the pistol down with such force that everyone turned pale, "if you ever have—the real thing, I mean—in your country, give it to some orphan girl; it shall never kill anyone here; we are all happy and want to live."

Coxe could not treat this political issue personally, but thanked her in a fitting manner as a representative of our government. While he was speaking she disappeared as suddenly as she had come.

The last good-bye was said. There never was such an embarkation. Robinson Crusoe's of yore, our late Pilgrim Fathers, and even Columbus of mighty renown, sink into insignificance by comparison. Their path glowed with millions of sparkling diamonds, airy, dancing fountains leaped up all around, gay with rainbow hues. Such a wild, mad waving! Such an uproarious cheering! Old Sol, far away in the west, blushed crim-

son, and hid his face. No amount of persuasion could make him come out again until the next day.

The strangest thing of all remains to be told. It happened that this was the Captain's birthday, and the dinner that was scheduled to come off on the last night was to take place on this. The change of date had come about by an innocent act of a little golden curly head on board. She had teased the Captain into writing his name in her Birthday Book. No sooner had he complied than she proceeded to make the rounds of the deck, stopping at every chair with the page open. One by one decided that the dinner must be on that evening. The Captain only shook his head. When the demand was a universal clamor, he yielded.

The whole voyage had resembled a delightful, holiday cruise. They had stopped at Algiers, dipped in at Gibraltar, steamed along the waterways of the Azores, and lingered a day at Madeira. With these recurring visits the passengers had lost sight of the solitude and the silent wastes of the ocean. Then the pranks of nature! There is no accounting for them. Would anyone believe that when the ship glided over the waters in the light of a young silver moon a dreamy haze suddenly settled down over the bold magnificent coast of the Republic?

The passengers who happened to be hanging over the rail watching Coxe and Clifford come on board did not feel a ripple of excitement. They realized that some unusual ovation was taking place under their very eyes and they ascribed it to a personal tribute of affection and regard tendered to the Captain from these friendly islanders. This fact was duly emphasized as they thought by the wealth and display of the floral decorations at dinner. The salon was a bower of roses.

"Our men" never knew what was going on upstairs, and that Captain with rare modesty never told the other passengers that all the beauty and color around and about were a delicate expression of gratitude from Coxe and Clifford for his prompt response to their signal and coming across the ocean to bring them home. This explained why no one knew that they were on board. For, being very abstemious men, they did not appear at dinner, making it a rule never to attend but one banquet a day. And if any men knew how to efface themselves, it was Coxe and Clifford. Nothing more was seen of them the rest of that voyage.

One morning there was a great shouting and hurrahing. Land was within sight. Everybody was busy doing the final things that must wait until the last moment. Then the rush and fussiness of being ready. Each one eager to have the first foot on land. No home-coming could have been better arranged for "Our men." They kept in the shadow unobserved and let the throngs pass. Then they actually walked off the gangway, unmolested by any reporter, onto the wharf and sauntered arm in arm up the street of their beloved New York.

By this time we certainly feel tolerably well acquainted with Coxe and Clifford. But, keeping in mind that old adage about familiarity breeding contempt or something even worse, we forebear to follow them into the bosom of their families. One word though, the women deserve to show of what stuff they are made. We can testify ourselves to the fortitude of the men in danger and despair. We have positive proof also, coming just at this time, that the women shared the same brave and heroic spirit. When news came that a ship had been wrecked, the fellow-craftsmen of Coxe and Clifford gave

them up for lost. It was just about the time that they would be on the ocean. When three, four, five months passed and no word, no letter was received, they had no doubt. They shook their heads and muttered to themselves, "Those poor women! Those poor women!"

Previously, the men from the office had dropped in to cheer up the wives and families, but of late, incapable of throwing off their own lugrubbious convictions and shrinking as men are apt to do from a gloomy topic, the women had been neglected.

The head man in the office decided that the time had come to speak. Acting accordingly, one morning he called out:

"I say, Perkins, you had better go up and prepare Mrs. Coxe for the worst." Scanning the room with a swift glance, his eye lit on another young man in the corner.

"Stop writing, Shields," he said, "and put on your hat and go up and prepare Mrs. Clifford for the worst."

It would be hard to tell why these two men were chosen. They had never met the ladies and the task assigned them was dolorous and delicate. They started off most reluctantly, and in their confusion forgot to inquire the number of the house. They knew the street and relied upon some blind chance to direct them to the several houses. The two Mrs. C.'s lived in different parts of the city. The lower story of both houses was a swelled bay which is a common style in modern architecture. On nearing the premises, the gaze of the young journalists was fixed upon one house. All the passers-by were staring at it. It was strangely decorated. It seems that both women had been dominated by the same idea and devised a motto embracing the same sentiment. As the men came a little closer, across the

middle window of the bay one word struck the eye: Welcome. A photograph of their respective husbands pending above. On the other window they read: Husband. On the corresponding window to the left was the word which some people consider the sweetest and dearest in our language: Father. They could not fade, they could not wither, they were written in immortelles.

They rang the bell in great trepidation, and fairly trembled in their efforts to start a conversation. Only one subject seemed possible. The last voyage, the last word, the last look. That cruel word death was never mentioned, but by some trick of phrasing "resignation" was pronounced quite audibly. Then both of those women, not knowing what the other was saying, spoke up briskly enough.

"I do not agree with you at all, my husband is alive, my husband is all right. I do not have to be told it. I expect him to walk into the house some day, just as if nothing had happened, and if we are all out and the rooms voiceless, he will be comfortable and happy."

Could any man on earth witness such devotion, faith and love with dry eyes? The ancients so full of poetry and romance could not have suggested a more tender home-coming for their heroes.

With our burning enthusiasm of loyal patriots we do not presume to claim for each of the successive presidents of the United States, one and all, the cardinal virtues in the same degree. No more than the English could beat us down in an argument that their Prince Hal was opposed to matrimony. It would be absurd, silly, contrary to all historical records that have as yet come to light. But we do affirm without hesitation that our present President lives near to the hearts of his people. When we say this, it leaves nothing more to be said, for it spells very plainly that he is adored. This

ought to satisfy any man's ambition, and we believe he is happy—he looks so. We may humor him a little but how could we help it? He is such a peace loving man. The whole world knows it. For years he lived on a lonely island surrounded by savages and he never killed one. He never pointed a gun at them. He did not want to. One day when they would have taken his life he held up his arms and opened his hands, fan-shaped and smiled. The natives were subdued and all rushed forward to shake hands and instantly they were friends. Why—why if pistol shots resounded over this beautiful land—if people fell dead—and our broad, rolling prairies were converted into wild, weird playgrounds for hordes of raving maniacs, as was threatened in a country we know, one thing would happen, our President would never smile again. Never! And without that smile, well——

We are not going to mention his name, personalities are in such wretched taste if not positively vulgar. For instance if we should call that big man in England, Georgie, or jump over the channel and speak of Willie, we are sure when we came face to face as people are bound to do sooner or later that we would hang our heads with shame and be at a loss to start a pleasant chat. Besides, we are fully persuaded that everyone who is in the confidence of our President will recognize him without an introduction, as it were.

Just at this point someone is losing patience and asking what connection has all this with Coxe and Clifford. Two poor, overworked journalists on the staff of—— There, the name of our sheet almost came out at last. We admit it does seem a flight far away from “our men” who were buckling down to work more anxious than ever to give their wives and children bread and butter, and tit-bits on high days and Sunday.

But, we offer no apology, presently everyone will understand the importance of its insertion.

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About this time Coxe and Clifford were subject to the most unaccountable invasions. Their offices were fairly mobbed. People came singly and in crowds. And what was it all about, do you think? Nothing more or less than that everlasting income tax. They tell Coxe and Clifford that our country is threatened with one. "Our men" have too much good sense to believe one word of this rubbish, but they cannot hush the talk. Neither can they eject these people from their doors. No gentleman could do that. And patient sufferers that they are, they listen to their talk. These men are wise and sensible, too, but oftentimes their attitude becomes alarming. They have been reading about the balance of powers in all nations and a lot of other things and declare that object lessons and warnings are coming to us from across the globe. "Poor fools," our men think, and pity them. Their pessimism and fright have warped their judgment. They do not know what they have been reading about. At these times Coxe and Clifford laugh outright and assure them of the future peace and prosperity of the country. What on earth do we want to learn? With our wealth and power and greatness! And compressed way down in their being is the secret conviction that all nations are coming to learn of us. Still they cannot check the talk, and Coxe and Clifford have no peace of their lives. They wonder sometimes if they are too sure. Could any disaster ever befall us? Ought they not to demand an audience of the heads of our government? But they have no affiliation with Washington. Not once has the President said to either of them: "What's the matter? Why don't you come

in to dinner some night?" Nor has one of his grand secretaries ever slapped Coxe or Clifford familiarly on the back and said: "Drop in and have a smoke, I am always at home." And no men are more slow about presenting themselves where they are not wanted than Coxe and Clifford. If they did go, wouldn't men laugh at them? Wouldn't they be called busy bodies? Oh, the pity of it, two well meaning men ridiculed by a nation they were trying to save!

Everyone must agree with us that Coxe and Clifford are no agitators, no sensationalists, no seekers after notoriety, and no men could have been more nonplussed, more staggered than they over the whole affair. How did that story of the income tax get circulated? You see their "Impressions" had not appeared. The blame was ours. Though we were innocent enough. And the first edition was finished ahead of time, all wrapped, and addressed and ready to be delivered the next morning. By some unforeseen misfortune our publishing house was burnt to the ground that very night. Nothing was saved. We are glad to spread it broadcast that Coxe and Clifford will not suffer any pecuniary loss. The suspension has whet the public appetite and we now have over a million waiting orders. This delay gave our men, too, a little time for reflection and they concluded that they had not obeyed the golden rule in reporting on the political storms and spasms of Our Sister Republic. Who would be so mean to tell if his neighbor had a fit? And pray what had they done—where was the difference? And that nation had recovered its equilibrium before they left its shores. With a great sense of remorse. Coxe and Clifford eliminated all notes on the subject. This clears up, we hope satisfactorily why our men have not been presented to royalty as well as all their fellow men before this. The time is coming.

Very soon the world will be bowing to them and taking off his hat.

But they have never been able to explain how that story leaked out. There is no reason why they should know. We can tell you all about it. It happened one morning, Sammy Coxe met Mamie Clifford going to school. Mamie stopped him, no we're wrong. Sammy stopped her, but Mamie spoke first.

"What's an income tax?" she asked.

"Something that cuts everybody at both ends," he replied stoutly.

"Cuts," she repeated, "oh, how it must hurt, and they have it in Our Sister Republic."

"No, they don't," Sammy spoke up, "they tried it, but it was no go."

"Pooh," and she tossed her head in the air and said, "that's because they are not Americans, if our President wants to, he will make it a go."

The crowd that were waiting on the corner for the trolley car overheard. To the astonishment of the motorman the car passed on empty. Everyone turned around in a body and rushed forward like mad and the next moment swarmed into our men's office. They have never stopped. The street is often blocked. The police are constantly interrogated as to the cause of the excitement.

This life was telling frightfully upon our men. To secure rest and comfort for one night at least they ran up to Tuxedo. A kind friend had put his suite at their disposal. On opening the door their spirits instantly revived. This formula of life appealed to them. The handsome, easy chairs, the beautiful eastern hangings, the soft thick rugs, the low, dim light and the entrancing open fire were eloquent of leisure and freedom. It was all of a piece with the dinner. A marvel of culinary art

ordered in advance by their host. Every mouthful went to the right spot. After this, as carnal as it may seem, Coxe and Clifford could not deny that eating, usually with them such a mechanical performance, might be made a pleasure, yea, even an art.

On leaving the table they repaired to their own drawing-room despite urgent invitations to join groups of smokers in the office. It was positively a physical delight to stiffen themselves up and to throw out their arms as far as they could go with a sense of opulent space and absolute seclusion. Sinking into easy, comfortable, chairs before the fire with their legs stretched out and hands thrust down into their pockets they watched the flames leap up from the glowing coal, their whole attitude bespeaking a delicious "laze." Coxe remarked, "We are as hermetically sealed from the world as we could be in the heart of Our Sister Republic."

A pause followed and our men looked forward to a long silent communion entering into each other's consciousness by the unerring leading of the spirit, deeper and more illuminating than all speech.

Suddenly a slight movement was heard. The men both started. To their speechless consternation the door opened and Mr. Alsopp darted into the room. Coxe and Clifford jumped up and for once in their lives they scowled at a fellow man. "What are you doing here?" their look seemed to say.

He was too much engrossed with his own business to be fastidious about the reception he received. He came to talk and the words were ready to tumble off his tongue.

"I tell you," he began, "you are cowards. Yes, cowards! To hold back any information you possess of the effect of an income tax upon a peaceful country. I have the best authority for it."

"Whose authority!" Coxe and Clifford thundered at him.

"George Washington's, there now," Alsopp thundered back.

"George Washington," our men repeated awed to silence.

"And what did George Washington say?" Coxe asked after a little.

Alsopp beamed, he was shaking with emotion. "I never knew him to say so much," he said with an air of intimacy. "He was more amazed than I can tell you that any American is worth a million, a whole million, and when I told him how many ways there were now of spending money, 'Mr. Alsopp,' he said, 'it seems to me, sir, that a million dollars in these latter days only answers to a hundred thousand of our forefathers. I would advise our President to let a man enjoy it. A smiling, happy community is leaven to a whole nation. Men didn't smile much in my day; we were solemn, serious men; we had war, do you hear, sir, we had war, and war is an awful thing,' and I do assure you that his voice was so broken by sobs as to be almost unintelligible. Then he chirped up and said so friendly, 'I am glad that you have peace, sir, the American deserves it; I know him, the world over, you can't find a more magnificent man. You can depend upon him to do his duty, and Mr. Alsopp, those gentlemen, am I right, sir? There are some who have more millions than they need. Present the case, they will not be long in handing over their surplus and they will feel honored, sir, to help the nation. If—if I am mistaken, sir, fie, shame, I repudiate——' "

At this interesting and instructive part of his communication, without any announcement, Mr. Bobson shot into the room. This threw Alsopp in a towering rage.

He crossed his hands behind him and began stalking up and down. His aspect was terrible to behold.

Bobson was oblivious to the interruption he had occasioned and snapping his head at Coxe and Clifford, placed himself directly before them and with uplifted arm and a warning finger began:

"Now look here, Coxe and Clifford, the time has come when you must discharge your obligation to the nation and disturb the repose of our President; I have the very best authority for it."

"Whose authority?" the men shouted to him.

"Abraham Lincoln's; now what have you to say?" Bobson shouted back.

"Abraham Lincoln," our men repeated in subdued tones.

After a moment's hush, Clifford asked, "What did Abraham Lincoln say?"

"Say, say, well, there never was a man more surprised than Lincoln at the strides that this country had made since he left it. He would scarcely believe me. Such prodigious wealth! The figures staggered him. Ah, Lincoln was a keen one! 'From what I understand Bobson of present conditions,' he said, 'a millionaire can live in ease and comfort and pay his bills; that's nice, it's encouraging. I am glad of it. It is a good thing for a nation to have a dignified, self-respecting, leisure class. I hoped it would come. Do you hear me, Bobson, leave him alone. But the man who makes a million a year, he can spare some and the country would go on all right if he did his duty. What is that that you say, Bobson, a million a week,—overnight? Stop, stop, it has been so long since I meddled with these affairs that I must collect myself.' He paused and I heard him give a deep drawn sigh, but before I spoke he went on. 'It seems to me, and no one knew the American better, that he is a

good sort of fellow, if things are explained to him, and sometimes we must be explicit, that he will be glad and quick to pay for his privileges; listen, Bobson, I don't want to interfere, but don't you think between ourselves that there is a wee bit of wrong somewhere with those fellows who are making money so awfully fast, and that the President ought to know and pitch into them?'—— At this point his voice grew so feeble that I could not catch another word. This is enough to convince you, isn't it?" Bobson demanded imperatively.

Alsopp's mood had changed. He stood grinning behind Clifford rubbing his hands gleefully and nodding encouragingly to Bobson to go on.

Coxe and Clifford looked straight into each other's eyes. Then they walked forward in slow, measured steps and clasped hands and very solemnly Coxe said, "Amen."

Clifford answered, "So be it."

At the beginning of our story we told you, gentle reader, that we were going to take you into our confidence and in return we beg an open, frank response from you. Would you believe it, Coxe and Clifford have never been able to shed their constitutional shyness and to come to any decision upon this vital matter and are still asking themselves the question, "Ought we—ought we to tell our President?" Now, what do you think?

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